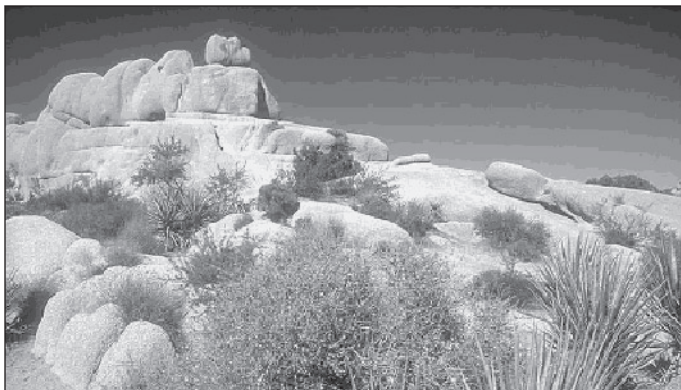**MARICOPA ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS**

Regional Profile

Regional Overview

Maricopa County is 9,223 square miles in area and contains 24 incorporated cities and towns, five Indian Communities and a large area of unincorporated land. The region is located in the Sonaran desert with elevations generally ranging from 500 to 2,500 feet above sea level.
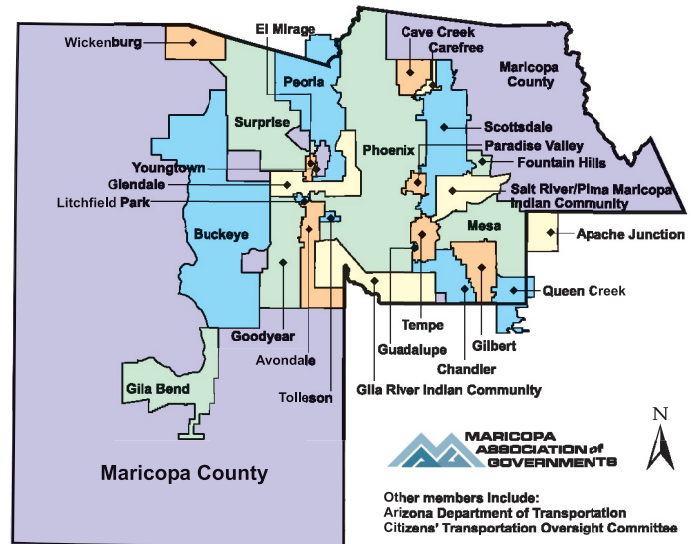
In 2002 Maricopa County contained 60 percent of the population of Arizona as well as 8 of the 9 cities in Arizona with a population greater than 100,000. The region is a transportation and distribution hub for the state. Interstate 10 spans the region from east to west and Interstate 17 extends from Phoenix to Flagstaff. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport at the center of the region is one of the world's busiest airports with 553,310 takeoffs and landings in 2001.

MAG Regional Planning Area

Between 1970 and 2002 cities and towns within Maricopa County expanded their corporate limits almost four-fold from 421 to 1691 square miles. The increase in the incorporated area within the county and its percent of the total county area are identified in *Table 1*. In 2001, Phoenix with 485 square miles exceeded Los Angeles in area while five other cities had an area of more than 100 square miles as noted in *Table 2*.

This expansion of corporate limits is anticipated to continue into the future as cities and towns annex additional property. To reflect the future corporate limits of the jurisdictions within Maricopa County, MAG has defined 28 Municipal Planning Areas which correspond to 25 cities and towns, two Indian Communities and the unincorporated portion of Maricopa County. These areas are subdivided into 147 Regional Analysis Zones (RAZs) and 1877 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) and form the MAG Regional Planning Area.

Date	Incorporated Area (Sq. Miles)	Percent of County	Percent of Population in Incorporated Area
1970	421	5	90
1980	685	7	88
1990	1,258	14	92
1995	1,515	16	92
2000	1,683	17	93
2002	1,691	18	93

Table 1: Maricopa Association of Governments Incorporated Area (in Square Miles) 1970-2002

City in Maricopa County	Area in Square Miles
City of Phoenix	485
City of Scottsdale	184
Town of Buckeye	159
City of Peoria (in Maricopa Co.)	142
City of Mesa	128
City of Goodyear	116

Table 2: Largest Cities in the County by Area

Current Land Use

The region can be desegregated into the land use categories shown in *Figure 7*. The predominant current land use type is agricultural/vacant with 58 percent, followed by open space with 33 percent. The next highest land use type is 6 percent for residential. Open spaces include parks, mountains, riverbeds, washes and other public areas. Land developed for retail, office and industrial uses as well as public and other types of employment comprises the balance of the development in the metro area with approximately 3 percent of the developed land dedicated to those uses.
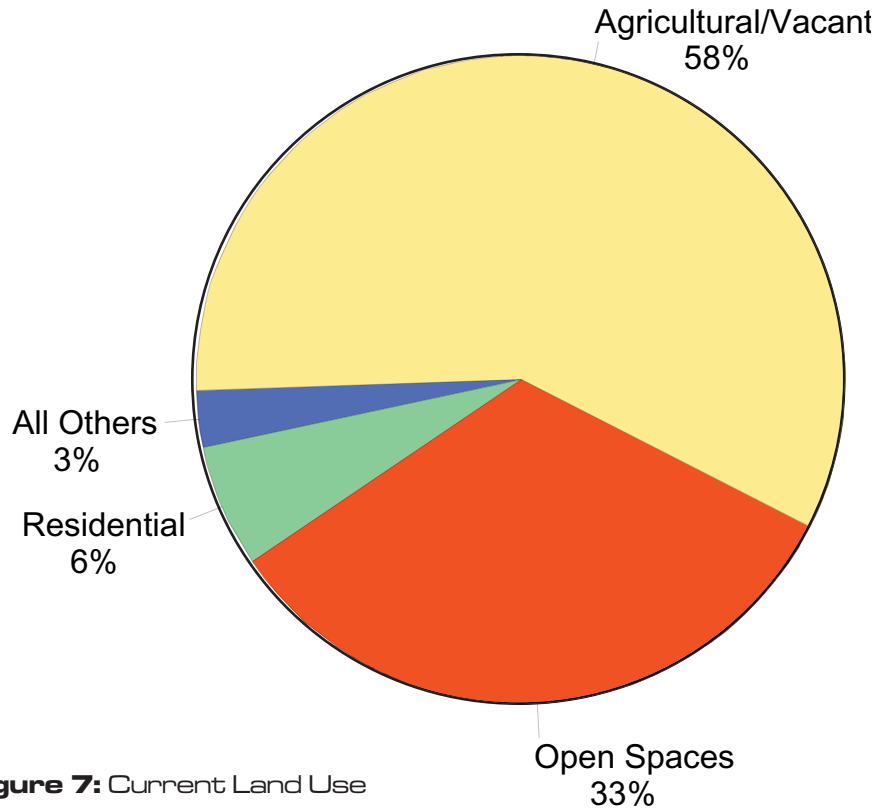
Figure 7: Current Land Use

Land Ownership

The pattern of land ownership influences the distribution of growth in the county. As shown in *Figure 8*, only 29 percent of the county is in private ownership. The remaining 71 percent is owned by public entities or Indian communities.
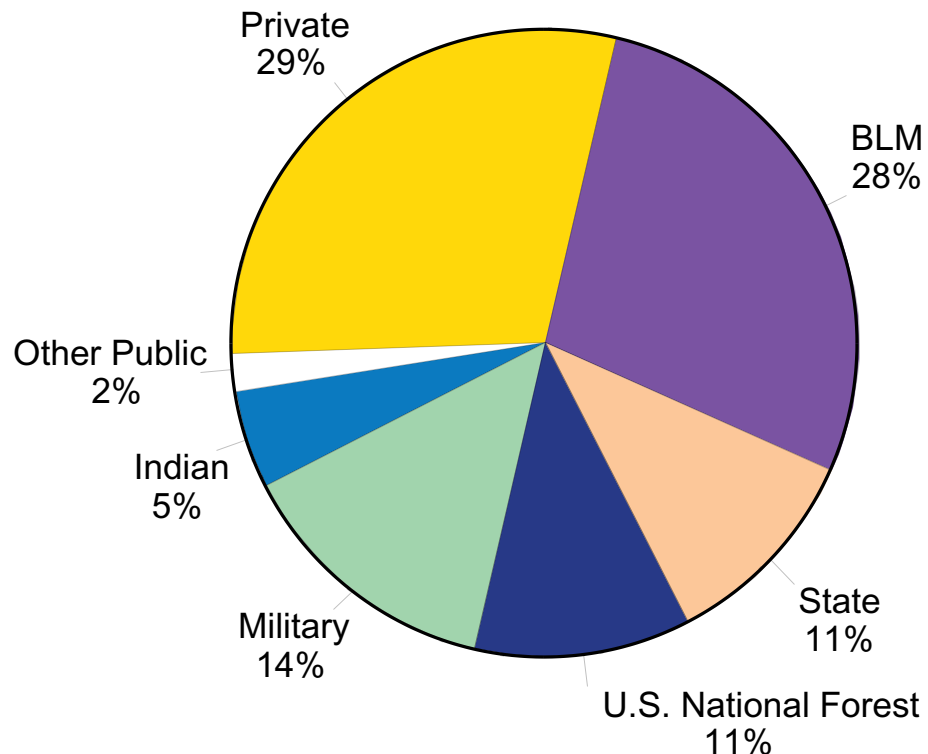
Figure 8: Land Ownership

Date	Population	Average Annual Increase
1960	664,000	
1970	971,000	3.9%
1980	1,509,000	4.5%
1990	2,122,000	3.5%
2000	3,072,000	3.8%

Table 3: Maricopa County Population Growth

Population Growth

Maricopa County has been one of the fastest growing regions for the past several decades. Historic population growth in the MAG Region between 1960 and 2000 is shown in *Table 3*, with average annual increases consistently above three percent.

Maricopa County resident population has grown at a faster rate than the State of Arizona and the United States overall as shown in *Figure 9*.

Historic and projected growth in Arizona and Maricopa County is illustrated in *Figure 10*.
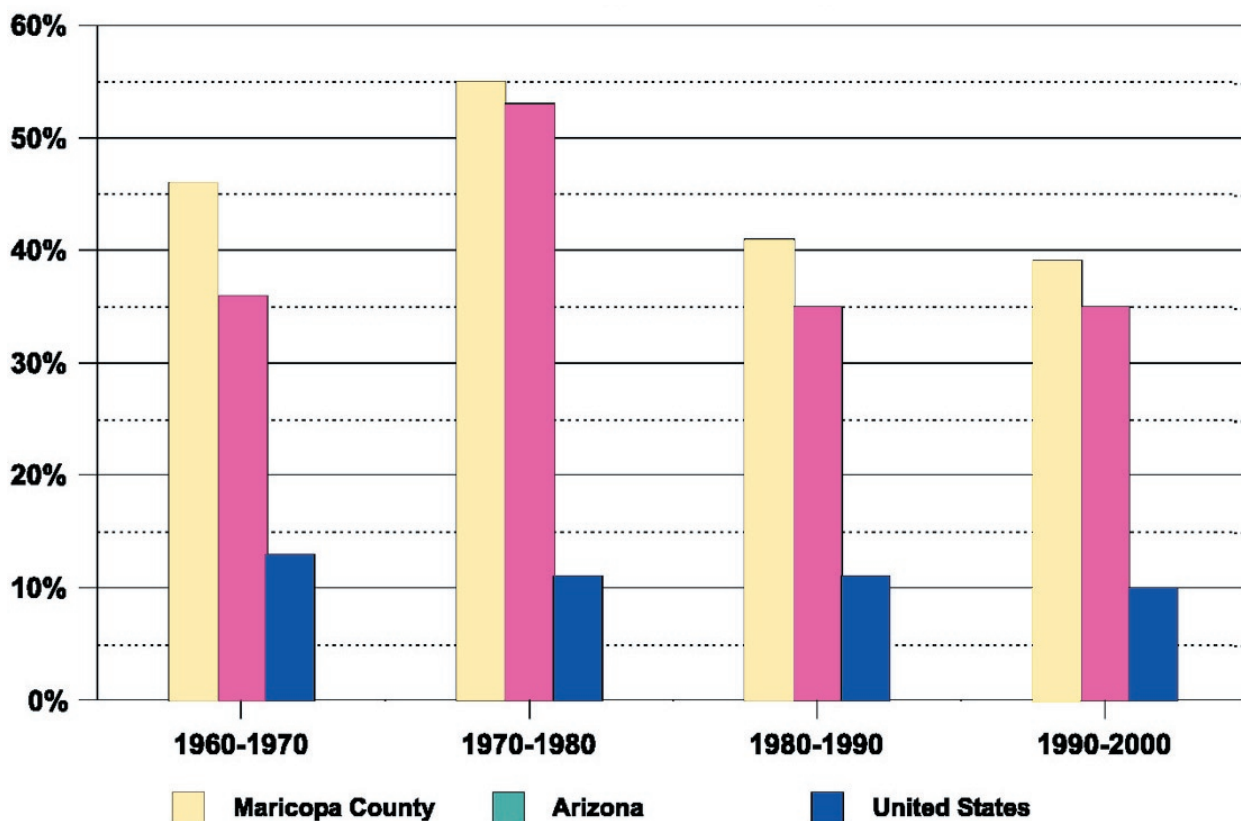

Figure 9: Percent Change in Population for Maricopa County, Arizona, and the United States

In 1991 the definition of the Phoenix Metropolitan Statistical Area was expanded to include Pinal as well as Maricopa County. Between 1990 and 2000 the Phoenix Metropolitan Area grew by 45 percent and moved from 20th to 14th in size among the top 35 Metropolitan Areas in the percentage rate of growth. The percentage rates of growth of the top 10 fastest growing Metropolitan Areas between April 1, 1990 and April 1, 2000 is shown in *Figure 11*.
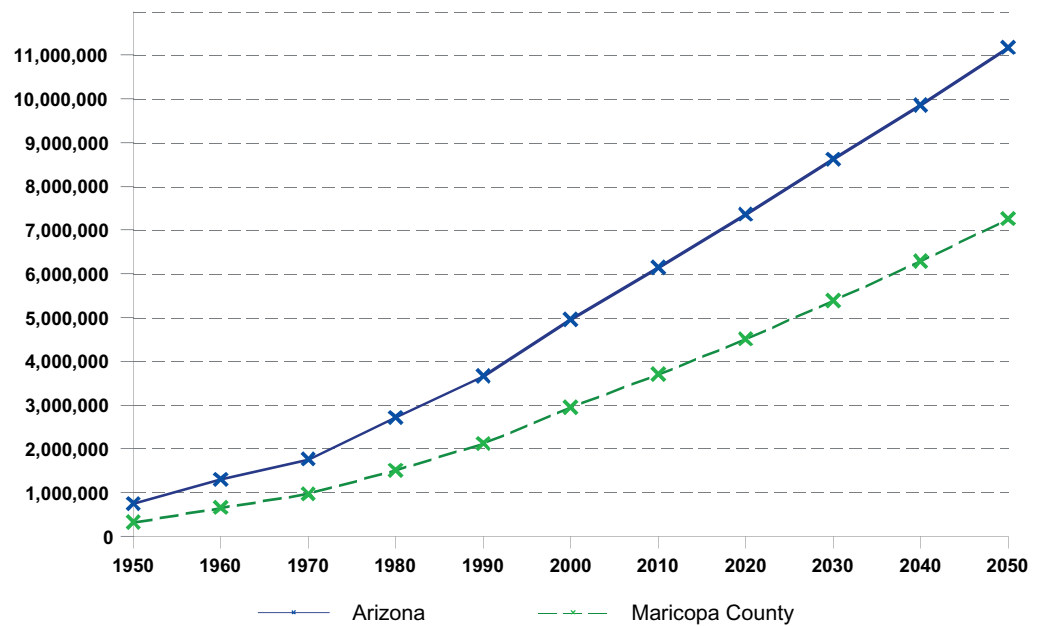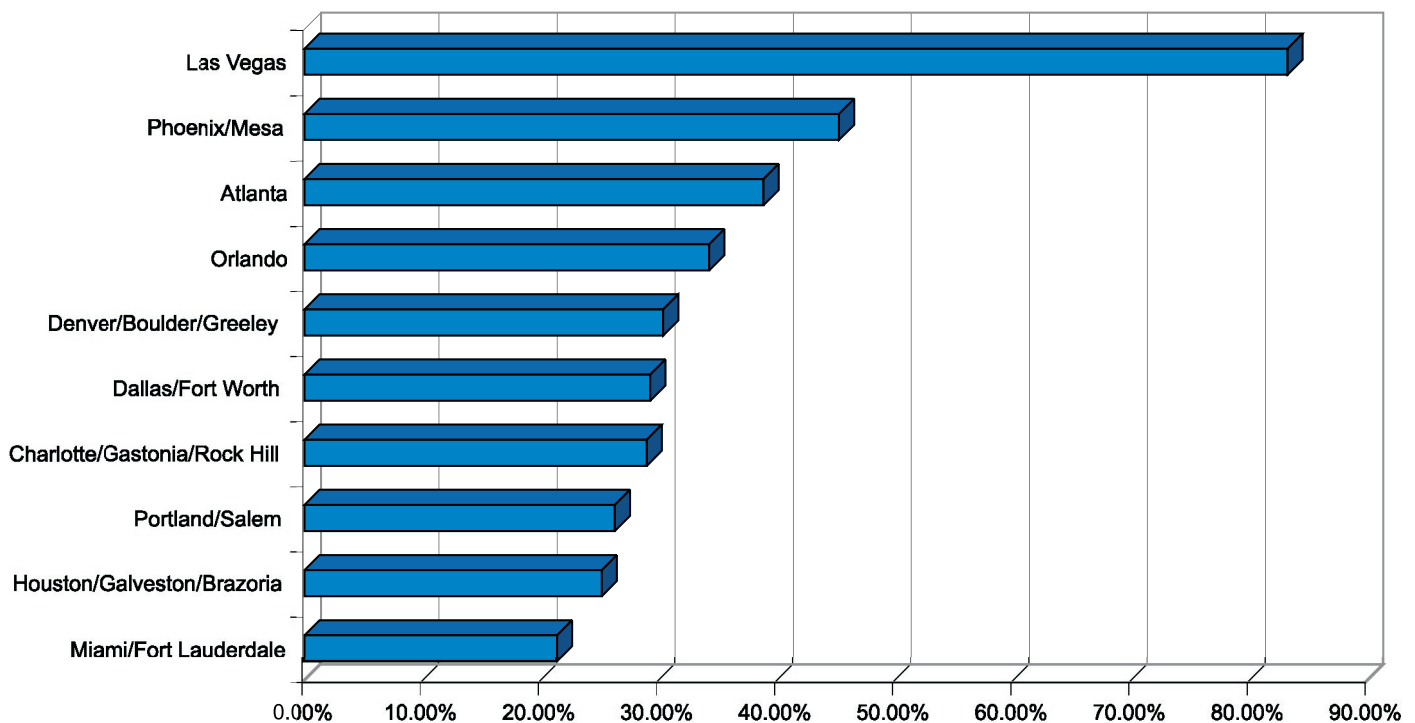
Figure 10: Growth in Population

Figure 11: Highest Percentage Changes in Population of the 35 Largest Metropolitan Areas

Housing in Maricopa County

Since the 1990 Census, residential completions have varied with economic conditions. From 13,456 residential completions during the lull in the economy in 1991, to a peak of 45,069 building completions in 1999. *Figure 12* identifies the change in residential completions from 1990 to 2001.

Between April 1, 1990 and June 30, 2002 more than 382,000 residential units were constructed. The mix of housing units shown in *Figure 13* for apartments and single family housing has varied substantially over this time period. While only 800 apartment unit completions were issued in 1992, apartment completions increased more than twelve-fold to 9,832 in 1999. As a percent of total building completions, apartment completions peaked at about 22 percent in 1996. Coinciding with the increase in percent of apartment completions was a decline in the percent of single family building completions from 90 percent in 1992 to 73 percent in 1999.
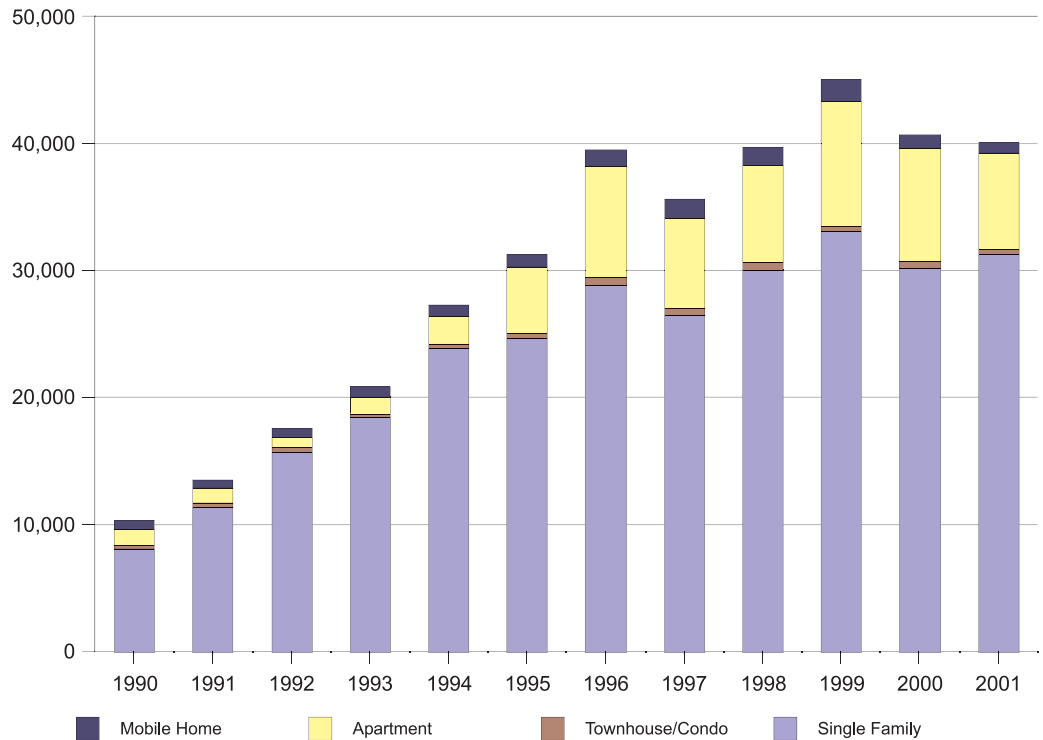

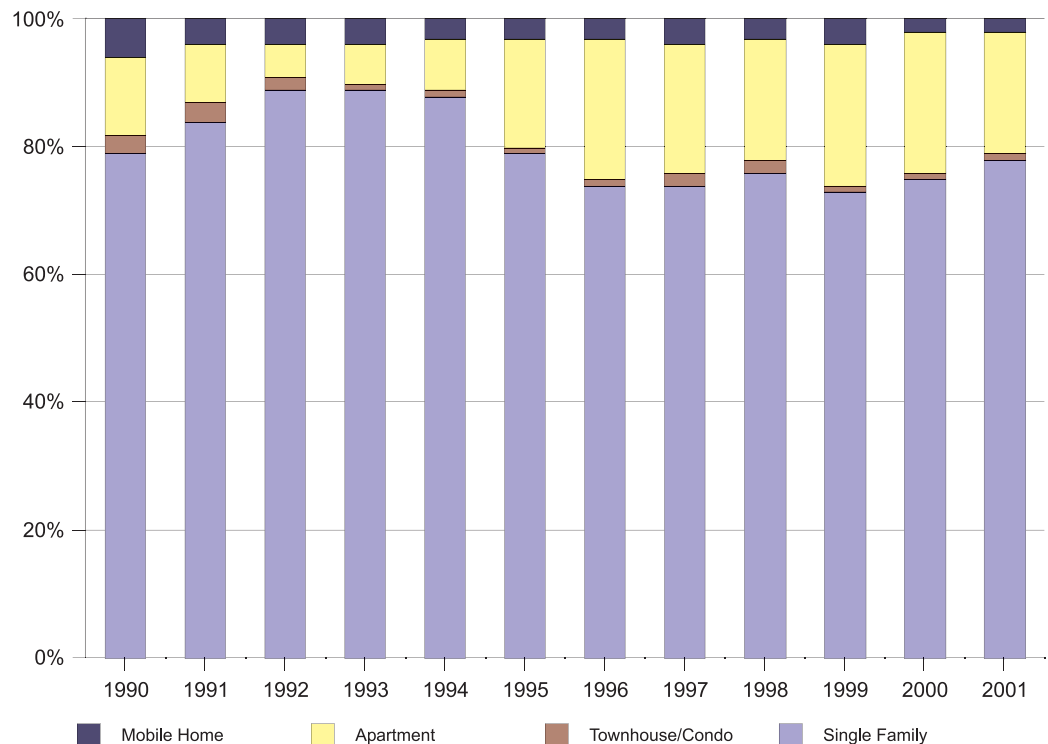**Figure 12:** Residential Completions by Year

Figure 13: New Housing Unit Mix by Year

Employment Growth in Maricopa County

Maricopa County has become increasingly important as a hub of business activity in the Southwest. In 2000 Maricopa County had about 1.5 million employees, a half million more than in 1990.

Figure 14 shows historical growth and projected growth of employment in Maricopa County between 1960 and 2020.
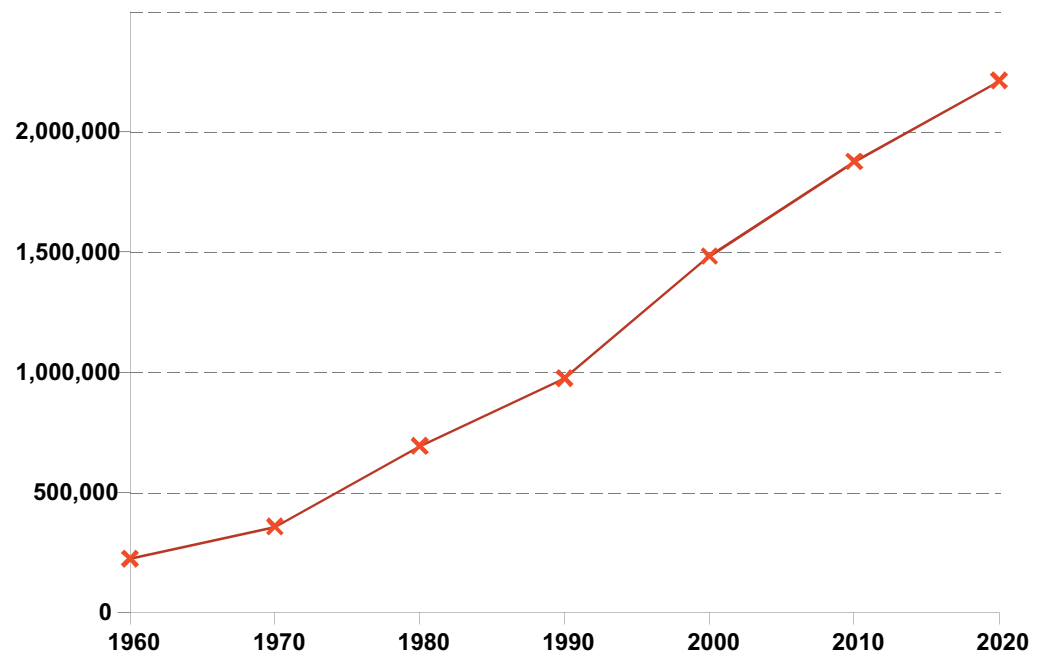
Figure 14: Growth in Employment